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Prevention of armed conflict

General and complete disarmament: implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Letter dated 18 September 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the statement delivered in Bamako on 1 September 2007 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali on the occasion of a meeting with the diplomatic corps concerning the situation in the Kidal region (northern Mali) (see annex).

The statement sets out the position taken by the Malian Government on this matter.

I would be grateful if you would circulate this statement as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 14, 98 (x) and 108, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ami **Diallo**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 18 September 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the United Nations

Introductory statement delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali at a meeting with the diplomatic corps

Koulouba, 1 September 2007

Thank you for your presence here this morning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. In the company of my colleagues from the ministries of territorial administration, defence and planning, I shall be speaking to you, distinguished ambassadors, heads of missions and representatives of international organizations, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Mali to report to you on the situation in the Kidal region.

This situation is characterized by the increasing number of terrorist acts perpetrated by a group of armed bandits led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga: members on a mission for the African Emergency Locust Project were taken hostage at Tejiarett on 26 August 2007; military supply convoys were attacked, men killed and equipment taken at Azakak on 27 August and near to Tinzawatène on 29 August; and civilian vehicles transporting people and livestock were blown up by mines near to Tinzawatène on 30 and 31 August, causing several deaths and injuries.

In response, on the instructions of the President of the Republic of Mali, the Government has very swiftly taken appropriate measures to control the situation.

The competent authorities of Mali also brought these events to national and international public attention as and when they happened.

Having recalled these facts, I would now, and subsequently, like to emphasize the following points:

1. Preserving national territorial integrity, protecting both people and property, and defending and safeguarding the values of democracy and of the Republic are, and remain, central to the mandate not only of our armed forces and security forces but also of the Republic's other institutions, which will continue to ensure their scrupulous application.

2. The President of the Republic will continue his efforts and initiatives for a concerted approach to ensure the stability and security of our country, including at the regional level.

3. With the support of its technical and financial partners, the Government will resolutely continue Mali's economic and social development programme, particularly in the northern regions, by implementing the conclusions and recommendations of the Kidal Forum of 23 and 24 March 2007.

In that respect, specific measures have already been taken, or are under implementation, particularly in the fields of health and communication. Road construction projects have also made satisfactory progress, including the asphalting of the Gao-Kidal, Ansongo-Ménaka-Anderaboukane, Niono-Tonka-Timbuktu and Kidal-Ménaka roads.

4. Mali will continue to honour its commitments to the Algiers accord of 4 July 2006:

The formation of special security units is now complete and two companies have been set up based in Tin-Ezié and Kidal.

A social and economic rehabilitation fund has been in place following the opening of an account at the Malian Solidarity Bank, into which payments are being made by the Governments of Mali and Algeria.

Similarly, a vocational training programme is being finalized for ex-combatants of the 23 May Alliance and for young people from the three northern regions. Four hundred young people stand to benefit from this programme.

5. The Government of Mali considers the actions of the armed bandits led by Ibrahim Ag Bahanga to be a serious breach in an area of our country of the hard-won peace that is essential to regional and even international security, as well as a flagrant violation of the ideals of the Third Republic and of international law, particularly the Ottawa Treaty on anti-personnel mines.

Following the example set by the Government of Mali, the international community should strongly condemn these acts and should work together with rigour and determination to combat the perpetrators of such acts.

In that respect, the Government of Mali knows that it can count on the political, diplomatic and material support of the countries and organizations that you represent to contain this new threat to international peace and security, posed by terrorism and illicit trafficking in weapons and drugs. My colleagues and I are now ready to answer any of your questions or to receive useful suggestions.